

# Navajo Dam and Reservoir Update

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation

December 1999



*Navajo Dam and Reservoir*

## Background

The Navajo Unit consists of a dam and reservoir that are owned, operated and maintained by the Bureau of Reclamation. Located on the San Juan River in New Mexico and Colorado, the facility provides an irrigation and municipal and industrial water supply, flood control, recreation, hydropower, and fish and wildlife benefits.

## Year-round Flow Recommendations

In May 1999, after a 7-year research period, the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program's biology committee recommended flow patterns for the San Juan River. The flows are only one element necessary for the recovery of the endangered Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker. It is anticipated implementation of these flows, or a reasonable alternative to them, will help protect the existing populations and habitat of these two fish species while maintaining the authorized purposes of the Navajo Unit.

## Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Reclamation will prepare a draft EIS describing the environmental impacts of alternatives for operating the dam and reservoir to implement the Recovery Program's flow recommendations. The draft EIS is scheduled for release for public review in October 2000.

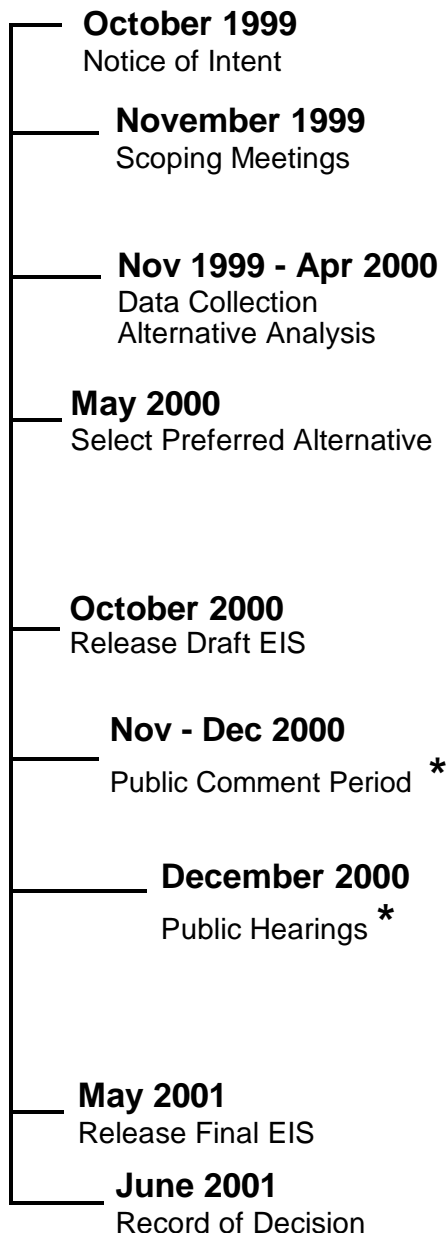
## November 1999 Scoping Meetings

Scoping meetings were held November 3 and 4 in Farmington, New Mexico, and Durango, Colorado, and on November 9 and 10 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Pagosa Springs, Colorado, respectively. The meetings were held to obtain the public's concerns regarding implementing the flow recommendations. Approximately 100 individuals attended three of the meetings (no one attended the Pagosa Springs meeting). Some of the issues raised at the meetings are included in the following list.

Impacts, issues, and concerns that have been identified to date during public and internal scoping:

- Endangered Species
  - Effects of flows on endangered fish food base
  - Other factors for recovery of endangered fish, not just flows
  - Implement a system to monitor effects of the flow changes
  - Concerns about effectiveness of the 7-year research period (1992-1998)
  - Look at native and non-native fish interactions
  - Effects on other endangered species
- Aesthetics and Land Use - effects of higher river flows and changes in reservoir water levels
- Wetland/Riparian Vegetation - effects on downstream and reservoir shoreline riparian areas
- Fish and Wildlife Resources
  - Effects of flows on trout fishery and impacts to wildlife nesting areas
- Hydrology and Water Rights
  - Impacts to downstream irrigation and industrial diversion structures
  - Impacts to Piedra Park domestic water users
  - Flood control issues
  - Erosion effects of higher flows in the San Juan River
  - Concern about development of very specific flow recommendations
- Water Quality Impacts
- Cultural Resources
  - Assure compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Antiquities Act, Sacred Sites Policy, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and Archaeological Resources Protection Act
- Indian Trust Assets
  - Assure compliance with Indian Trust Asset Policy and consult/coordinate with Native American tribes to identify impacts and develop any necessary agreements
- Environmental Justice
  - Assure compliance with Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations)
- Social and Economic Impacts
  - Impacts to Navajo Dam Power Plant
  - Impacts to concessionaires
  - Impacts to area economy (trout fishery and flat water boating)
  - Concern about future water development under compact agreements
  - Concern about moving water from upper basin states to lower basin states
- Recreation Resources
  - Impacts to trout fishery
  - Impacts to flat water boating
  - Impacts to rafting/boating on San Juan River
- Other Issues and Concerns
  - Removal of Navajo Dam as an alternative to implementing the flow recommendations
  - Consider modifying the dam
  - Concern that purpose and need and project scope are too narrow
  - Concern that adaptive management will not be incorporated in the process

## Project Time Line



\* Next opportunity for formal public participation. However, comments and concerns are welcome at any time.

## Cooperating Agencies

To date, the following have been invited or have requested to be cooperating agencies in the preparation of the EIS:

- Jicarilla Apache Tribe
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- The Navajo Nation
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
- The Southwestern Water Conservation District
- New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission
- San Juan Water Commission
- Albuquerque Army Corps of Engineers
- Environmental Protection Agency
- U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- City of Farmington
- Colorado Water Conservation Board
- National Park Service (Glen Canyon)
- Bureau of Land Management

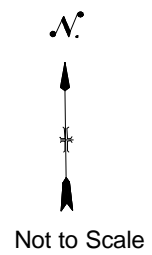
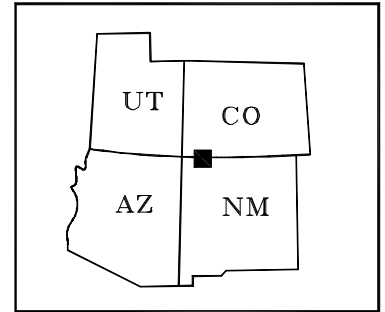
Reclamation will take the lead, and the above agencies who become cooperators, will assist in the preparation of the draft EIS.

Additional comments/concerns may be sent to:

Bureau of Reclamation  
2764 Compass Drive, Suite 106  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506  
Fax: 970-248-0601  
or E-mail: [jwright@uc.usbr.gov](mailto:jwright@uc.usbr.gov)

If you have questions or need more information, contact Ken Beck at 970-385-6558 or Jone Wright at 970-248-0636. Information is also available at Reclamation's Internet web site: [www.uc.usbr.gov](http://www.uc.usbr.gov) (select Environmental Studies, Summaries, & Reports.)

# Navajo Reservoir Vicinity Map



Bureau of Reclamation  
Western Colorado Area Office  
2764 Compass Drive, Suite 106  
Grand Junction, CO 81506